

throngs, to the grave, yet are full of loving and noble deeds. In lives "so holy, pure and sweet, that the very heavens are imaged in their blossoms." They have no graven stones to mark their resting place but, ah, "They are tombed in hearts that knew them well."

Shall we not remember the heroism of the mother, who day after day, week after week, while the head throbs and the heart strings are being rent in twain, yet does the duties of life, just as they come to her, with a smiling, cheerful face, sacrificing her life for the ones she loves. Her tired shoulders almost bent down with care, yet always a cheerful look and a word of encouragement, when husband comes home at night, from his daily toil, tired and worn out; always ready to answer the childish questions, which greet her each hour of the day, in a cheerful tone. Sometimes almost broken down by the responsibility of the training of the little ones, God has given her, yet never a complaining word do we hear. Can this heroism be excelled? Ah no, no nation on earth can boast of greater.

Our Bible says, "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city." History cannot boast of such a group of pearls, as the heroes of our Bible make up. It will ever remain matchless. It does not seem possible that the world could ever reproduce a St. Paul or a St. John. Think of the heroism of Peter when being taken to the cross, to suffer the cruel death of crucifixion, we hear him express his desire, to be crucified head downward, saying, "I am not worthy to be crucified as my Master was."

Think of the noble characters of Paul and Silas, imprisoned and threatened with cruel death, yet when the prison was shaken, the doors opened by an angel of God, they did not try to make their escape. No, they stood by their post, and obeyed God, whatever the cost and when the keeper, finding the prison doors open and supposing the prisoners to have made their escape, drew forth his sword and would have slain himself, but the heroic Paul cried in a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm; for were all here." Ah, the hosts of heaven might rejoice at such courage for Christ.

Me thinks I see the chain, which bound John Huss to the stake, turned into purest gold, by the leaping flames which covered it and hung in the courts of heaven, encircling the words which he spoke as they brought forth the chain to bind him. "Welcome this chain for Jesus' sake."

We find there was an age when to proclaim the name of Jesus meant death, yet many rather than deny their Savior, let the very flames of earth burn the flesh from their bones, but not an unflinching step did they take. Do we need such heroism to day? Yes and greater. The world to-day needs who, as Garfield once said: "Men who will dare look the devil in the face and tell him he is the devil." There are devils appearing to us in all forms to-day. "Going about as

a roaring lion, seeking whom they may devour" and we need heroes to down them and raise the Lamb of God victorious.

It sometimes takes greater heroes to do this, than to give up life. We need men, who are not afraid to proclaim Christ anywhere, even tho it means the loss of all that is near and dear to them. It may mean the loss of fortune, friends' home and loved ones. Can we realize what this means? Meditate upon it a few moments, and see if it does not deserve the name hero to do this.

Can we call Christian heroism the greatest heroism? Yes—with greatest emphasis. The greatest victory that can be won, is victory over the sins of this world

"They only the victory win,
Who have fought the good fight
And have vanquished the demon that tempts us within,
Who have held to their faith,
Unseduced by the prize, that the world holds on high,
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist,
fight, and if need be—to die,"

WHY DID JESUS SPEAK IN PARABLES?

J. ALLEN MILLER

This question involves a study of Matt. 13: 10 17; Mk. 4: 11 12, 21 25; Lk. 8: 10, 16 18.

These scripture statements belong between the middle and close of Christ's second year's ministry. It seems clear from the question of the disciples that Jesus had hitherto not spoken in parables. His teaching had already attracted wide attention. He became popular with the masses, but this neither could nor did last. Already in the multitudes that thronged him were those who were both hypocritical and hostile.

The Disciple's Question

"Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" Jesus' new method of teaching attracted the attention of his disciples and they raised the question. It seems clear that the question would not have been asked had the disciples been familiar with parable-teaching. From the simple, direct and plain style of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus passes to the style of the parable. The change was noted and the Master when alone with the disciples was asked "Why?"

Jesus' Answer

The answer of Jesus to the disciples' question is a most remarkable passage. It is given most fully by Matthew. Jesus appropriates a prophecy of Isaiah (vi: 9 10). He answers the question by an appeal to Scripture. He confirms his answer by the Scripture quoted.

In Jesus' answer we can clearly discern a two-fold purpose. The multitudes were easily divisible into two distinct classes: the inner circle of disciples who with joy received his teaching and those others who were fault finding, unbelieving, and hard hearted. He teaches in parables in order to be able to speak to both classes. To the first to reveal the principles of the kingdom of heaven;

to the second to conceal the same. A careful reading of the Scriptures at the head of this article will confirm these statements.

To Reveal

"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" Herein lies the reason why Christ spake in parables when he had his disciples in view. Jesus uses the term "mystery" in the sense not commonly understood. The word signifies, 1. that which is hidden or secret; 2. God's plan of Salvation thru Jesus Christ, once hidden but now revealed. The secret purposes relative to the kingdom now made known. In this second sense the word is used in our texts, also in Rom. 16: 25; 1 Cor. 2: 7; Eph. 3: 9; Col. 1: 26 and other places.

To the disciples Jesus revealed the principles and life of the kingdom of God. They are anxious to know the truth and, so, instead of hiding it from them or mystifying it, the parable teaching of Jesus made it clear and never to be forgotten. They kept what they had and with ever-increasing clearness perceived more and more the Master's teaching. Matt. 13: 12; Mk. 4: 25; Lk. 8: 18.

To Conceal

That the great Teacher meant to hide his teaching from those who only seemed to have (Lk. 8: 18) is clear from our passages.

Matthew introduces the passage 13: 13 with a word denoting *results*. Mark (4: 12) and Luke (8: 10) introduce the passages with a word denoting *final end and purpose*. So that from the three narratives it is clear that Jesus sets forth not only the purpose but the results as well of his parables as concerns those who were not true disciples.

The purpose clauses are Mk. 4: 12 and Lk. 8: 10. Stier truly says: The kingdom of heaven is itself a mystery for the natural earthly understanding, and, like other kingdoms, it has its *state secrets* which cannot and ought not be cast before every one.

A man whose character is such as to love God, search for truth, appropriate the provisions of grace, and increase in the wisdom of God's revelation,—such a man thru willingness, or inactivity or open hostility loses even what he has. Indeed he only seems to have and really keeps nothing thru unfaithfulness. Such may see and hear but shall never understand.

And the Matthew passage (13: 13 sq) sets forth the results of such unfaithfulness. Such who might understand but will not will still more and more become hardened in heart and reprobate in life; more and more will they fall under the condemnation of God. Truly Isaiah is right in his judgment upon those who fail to appropriate God's offered grace.

We see that Time robs us, we know that he cheats,
But we still find a charm in his pleasant deceits,
While he leaves the remembrance of all that was best,
Love, friendship and hope, and the promise of rest.
—Holmes.